



The State of Wisconsin's Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection agrees with us!

"Most citizens hold law enforcement and public safety personnel in high regard, and are willing to do what they can to support them. This sense of loyalty may lead you to agree to donate to groups that align themselves with causes related to police or fire fighters. But, solicitations, calls, and mailings from groups claiming to have an affiliation with police or fire fighters should be looked at carefully. Most calls for police and fire fighter groups are not made by local officers, even though this is what you may assume or be led to believe. Solicitors are usually *professional fundraisers*, who may or may not be calling on behalf of a local agency. For example, when a labor union collects money, it is divided between the professional fundraiser and the labor union, not the local department, which is already funded by tax dollars. Even if a group claims to be affiliated with a local organization, this does not necessarily indicate that much of the money will benefit the local agency. Other groups are for-profit companies which adopt a name that sounds as if it is associated with police or fire fighters, but *none of the funds go to any such groups or causes*. Another important fact you should know before making a decision to donate, buy a ticket, or pay for advertising is to find out what percentage of the money collected actually goes to the group. A law enforcement group can end up with as little as 10 or less percent of the donated funds. You may think it is quite an accomplishment when \$56,000 is raised for your local police or fire organization, but may become disgruntled to find that \$560,000 was actually collected from people in your community. All charities not exempted by law, which are soliciting in Wisconsin, must be registered with the state Department of Regulation and Licensing. Charities that comply with Wisconsin's charitable solicitations law must disclose the true name of the charity, its actual location, and primary purpose. You can call 608-266-5511 to verify if the charity is registered. Additional information about charities can also be obtained through the Better Business Bureau's Philanthropic Advisory Service (800-273-1002) and the National Charities Information Bureau (212-929-6300). For more information about complaints filed against specific organizations contact the Division of Consumer Protection at 800-422-7128 or file a complaint!"



The information provided on this form is true, complete and correct to the best of the MCSO's knowledge, and made in good faith. Send comments regarding this form, or the content contained therein, to MCSO Deputy Inspector Edward Bailey, care of the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office, 821 W. State Street, Room 107, Milwaukee, WI 53233 (or via the web at ebailey@milwcnty.com). The information contained in this material is intended solely for the use of the community, and relies on un-classified information maintained by Milwaukee County, by the MCSO, and publicly available via the World Wide Web.





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Community Information:

Questionable Telemarketing Campaigns by Police Groups: How Not To Get **HUSTLED**

Prepared By: MCSO Community Facilitators Unit

Traditionally, December is a popular month for organizations and non-profits to solicit money. People are in a giving mood and facing the year-end deadline for charitable deductions. While most groups are legitimate, *many are not*. The Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office has received several complaints and some inquire about aggressive telephone solicitation tactics from groups using the words "deputy," "police," or "law enforcement," in an attempt to legitimize their fundraising effort. Donations to groups using these words may not always benefit their stated causes. In one instance a group called "Police Officers Alliance" collected \$300,000 to help police causes, but only a paltry \$500 actually benefited the officers. The rest was spent on things such as political contributions, lobbying activities, legal counsel, insurance, and representation before city, county or state officials. It is important to note that *professional associations and labor unions are not charities*. Using the words "Milwaukee County Sheriff" in their solicitation may mislead potential donors to assume that it has the support of the Sheriff's Administration. *The Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office does not endorse any fundraising / solicitation done by telephone.*

Here is a checklist to prevent being misled when making contributions:

- Ask questions...Is the caller being paid, or calling as a volunteer? How much of your donation will actually go to the local organization?
- Examine the size of the organization doing the soliciting.
- Ask about the composition of its governing board, its history and its affiliations.
- Ask for a written disclosure of how the group spends its money.
- **Never** give out credit card information over the phone.
- Ask them to send their donor pledge form on official stationary signed by the Sheriff.
- Call Milwaukee County Sheriff's Administration at 414-278-4647 if you have any doubts!



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